

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS RE: ROCKPORT COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT

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BACKGROUND

The Leshner Family Foundation (LFF) is putting out this preliminary set of answers to questions we assume may be top of mind for Rockport residents relating to the community park proposal. Thank you for taking the time to read it. We also hope to hear from you online via our survey (link [here](#)) or in-person in the weeks and months to come.

Should our proposal receive voter approval in June, the project and our collaboration with the town and community will begin in earnest. What are now placeholder design sketches will take on greater definition and clarity. As the project design phase progresses, so will the broader planning for not only building a community park but also managing and sustaining it. So we appreciate the need for flexibility and dynamism in our planning to ensure the project properly accommodates community feedback.

Therefore, this document should be viewed as a “living document”. It will be updated and refreshed in waves as new information and details emerge. We intend to keep the community informed of these updates through our online presence and in-person outreach.

We invite all Rockport residents to stay close to these updates in the ways that are most comfortable for them. The community park’s ultimate success will depend on a common vision, collaboration, and a sustained commitment to see this shared space remains vibrant and well looked after for generations to come.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

1. How do you know the community needs/wants a community park?

We know that the New Height Group’s (NHG) recommendation to build an 83-unit housing complex was unpopular. We also know that many Rockport residents who responded to NHG’s survey indicated they want to see green space preserved. Specifically, there was interest in a community space for people of all ages to walk along trails, have play places for children, and serve as a venue for community events such as farmers’ markets, concerts and food truck festivals.

To build upon and better appreciate these community signals, we launched a digital survey on our website (link [here](#)). Public meetings are being planned for May/early June and we expect to share the survey results at those meetings. We will also launch a follow-

on survey after the June 13th vote to demonstrate continued commitment to receiving community feedback and incorporating where appropriate.

2. Don't we have enough recreation facilities right now?

There may indeed be Rockport residents who feel this way, and we do have a number of small, attractive parks as well as one devoted to organized sports. Some have basic equipment such as swing sets and slides that also offer places to sit and gather. But we don't have a single community space that offers the range and variety of elements (e.g., innovative playground equipment, fieldhouse, performance space) that this concept envisions.

3. Will local citizens be given the opportunity to weigh in on the plan as it develops?

We want to ensure adequate time is given to hear, review and discuss community ideas regarding what the community park should encompass. We have already started a "listening exercise" which began with an online survey available on our [website](#). We hope as many residents as possible make time to fill it out so we can hear from you. Please click [here](#) to fill out the survey and thanks in advance!

With the assistance of local volunteers, we plan to organize a series of meet ups in each neighborhood, starting in May. The Town will sponsor two public information meetings: May 25th at 6pm at Union Hall and June 1st at 6pm at the West Rockport Baptist Church. Presenters will include representatives from LFF, Viewshed, and the Town.

We also intend to use space at the Barnswallow Book Shop (across from the library on Russell Ave) to mount an exhibit with preliminary conceptual drawings of the park. The exhibit will be open to the public starting in mid-May. We are exploring additional locations to mount exhibits and invite residents to regularly visit our [website](#) to check for relevant updates. All exhibit locations will have suggestion boxes so we can gather community feedback online and in-person.

4. Will local contractors and vendors be used for the park's construction?

LFF recognizes the presence of quality, local contractors in Rockport. We commit to the hiring of local contractors and vendors as much as possible to work on all aspects of the park construction, which will further benefit our community.

5. Will you be able to change the use of the land after a certain number of years?

The land will continue to be owned by the Town. Therefore, any changes to the land or its use as a community park would ultimately rest with the Town. The LFF is committed to creating an enduring public space that benefits all Rockport residents. We would expect that the conservancy, in partnership with the Town, will support and protect the park.

6. Can the park be expanded in the future?

Yes. However, any park expansion and the costs associated would be overseen by the conservancy's volunteer board and the Town of Rockport. The current Phase I design envisions future space for additional park amenities such as sport courts (basketball, pickleball, bocce), a year-round performance space or even a skate/pump park.

FINANCIAL/LONG TERM COMMITMENT

7. Is there an estimated cost to design and build the park? What is it and how did you arrive at that number?

Yes. The initial estimate is up to \$3,000,000. These figures are based on preliminary design concepts and previous experience developed by the Landscape/Design/Architectural firm Viewshed. LFF will commit funds to cover park design and construction.

8. How will the park be sustained after it's built?

LFF wants to leave the park in the strongest possible position once completed. Long-range success of parks based on public-private collaboration rests on three pillars: volunteerism, organization, and funding. We have already witnessed the level of volunteerism among Rockport residents who generously give of their time and energy to care for their shared spaces.

In terms of organization, LFF will work with the Town and the community to establish a volunteer-led conservancy. The conservancy will hold two main responsibilities. The first is to manage park operations and maintenance. The second is to raise funds for an endowment and steward that money to ensure funding is available for future generations.

Should we receive voter approval, design activities will continue to bring this preliminary concept into sharper focus. As there is more clarity around design components, site requirements, and costs to adequately maintain the park, all key stakeholders in this project—LFF, conservancy, Town, and community—will be in a strong position to validate that the planning and resources are sufficient to proceed and break ground.

9. What is a park conservancy?

A park conservancy is a non-profit organization that supports the maintenance, fundraising, and advocacy for a park. It exists so that a community knows there is an organized effort to sustain the park into the future.

10. What is an endowment?

An endowment is a dedicated bank account with funds that can only be used to pay for maintenance or other basic operational expenses associated with park activities. The funds in this account would earn interest or could be placed into low-risk investments such as US Treasury Bills. The purpose of the endowment is to generate adequate income on a yearly basis to support park maintenance and operations.

11. What commitments if any is LFF making towards the park endowment and fundraising efforts?

LFF commits to support the fundraising efforts of the park conservancy. It will also contribute to the endowment.

12. Who's responsible for setting up the conservancy?

Should we receive voter approval, LFF will coordinate with the Town and local residents to set up a park conservancy. It will be run by a volunteer board drawn from the wider Rockport community.

13. Why should the Town partner with the foundation to do this, rather than sell the land to develop a taxable income-generating development on the land?

LFF is offering the Town a \$1,000,000 public works donation in lieu of the Town selling the property outright. This figure was arrived at after reviewing current market value assessments of the RES site prepared by three independent real estate brokers. Although all three valuations came in at less than \$1,000,000, LFF opted to make a donation in excess of the prevailing market valuation for the land.

TIMING/APPROVAL PROCESS

14. When would you break ground on the park?

Anticipated range is Fall 2024 – Spring 2025. We have a strong desire to proceed at a pace that is comfortable for those involved and that builds confidence within the community that the project is on sound footing.

15. When would the park open?

Anticipated range is Summer 2025 – Fall 2026.